

## Heritage Citation



### Freemasons Home (1925-1948 wings)

#### Key details

<b>Addresses</b>	At 60 Wakefield Street, Sandgate, Queensland 4017
<b>Type of place</b>	Care facility
<b>Period</b>	Interwar 1919-1939
<b>Style</b>	Art Deco
<b>Lot plan</b>	L27_SP222734
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2005 Date of Citation — December 2008
<b>Construction</b>	Roof: Terracotta tile; Walls: Face brick
<b>People/associations</b>	Clifford Ernest Plant (Architect)
<b>Criterion for listing</b>	(D) Representative; (E) Aesthetic; (H) Historical association

The Aged Masons, Widows and Orphans' Home was first established in 1925 by the Freemasons of the United Grand Lodge of Queensland as part of their commitment of care to the masonic community. The site comprises four heritage components; Lewis Cottage (1925), Hutton and Hertzberg Cottage (1932), the Robinson Block (1938) and the A.E. Hall Extension (1948). Since 1948, the site has continued to expand and the Home now facilitates the provision of care for more than 500 patients.

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## History

The first section of the Freemasons' Homes at Sandgate was built in 1925, several years after the United Grand Lodge of Queensland acquired the site in 1913. Subsequent additions were constructed in 1932, 1938 and 1948. The complex was established as part of the benevolent work of the Freemasons of Queensland and was designed to provide a home for aged masons and the widows and orphans of masons. It demonstrates the commitment of the Freemasons movement in Queensland to performing charitable works for the community, and in particular to providing for their own "brethren".

The Freemasonry movement has had a long history in Brisbane. The inaugural meeting of the North Australian No. 1098 Lodge took place at the Freemasons' Hotel in Albert Street on 13 July 1859. The formation of other lodges followed and by 1920, the number of masons in Brisbane had exceeded the capacity of the Albert Street meeting place. Some 2000 freemasons were present at the first meeting of the United Grand Lodge of Antient Free and Accepted Masons of Queensland on 21 April 1921 at the Exhibition Building in Brisbane. The Grand Lodge would eventually become the governing body of all lodges in the State. From its earliest days, it planned a new Masonic Centre which would function as a memorial to the fallen masons of World War I as well as an administrative centre and meeting place. This came to fruition with the opening of the Masonic Lodge in Ann Street in 1930.

The Masonic movement was active in the Sandgate area from 1894 when the Norman Lodge was established. It was, however, the United Grand Lodge of Queensland, not the local Masonic lodge at Sandgate, which was responsible for establishing the Aged Masons, Widows and Orphans Home at Brighton. The charitable arm of the United Grand Lodge was named the Board of Benevolence.

The Widows and Orphans Institution was formed in 1908 by the Grand Lodge of Queensland as part of the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the inauguration of the North Australian Lodge in 1859. It was suggested that a collection be made from all the Lodges in the district for the purposes of creating a fund to assist the widows and orphans of Masons and establishing a home for orphans in Queensland. A second fund, the Freemasons' Homes, was established in 1912 by the District Grand Lodge of England and J.R.H. Lewis was elected as its first president. The two funds were amalgamated in 1927 under the title of "The Aged Masons, Widows and Orphans' Institution of Queensland".

In December 1913, just over seventeen acres of land at Sandgate was purchased at Sandgate for the purposes of building a Freemasons' Home for aged masons, widows and orphans. The parcel of land was bounded by Paul and Ward Streets to the north and Wakefield Street to the south. Titles for the land were initially held in the name of James Henry Phipps, but were transferred within days to trustees. The plans of the Freemasons for the development of the site were interrupted by the outbreak of World War I. After the war, six acres on the western side of the holding were sold to the War Service Homes Commission and plans to start building the proposed home could be made.

At this time, Brighton was beginning to develop as a small township. Growth in the area had lagged behind that of its more popular neighbours, Sandgate and Shorncliffe, which had become fashionable seaside resorts in the

1880s. The low-lying swampy land and lack of public transport in Brighton retarded development until the 1920s when some forty families lived in the area.

According to the Jubilee history of the Fund, it was the first president, J.R.H. Lewis, who negotiated the land sale. After the death of Lewis, a fund was established in his memory. This fund and other Masonic donations were then used to build the first stage of the Home in 1925. The brick building was named the Lewis Cottage in honour of J.R.H. Lewis and was comprised of two bedrooms and a lounge.

Another mason instrumental in the drive to provide homes for widows, orphans and aged masons was F.S. Hutton, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Queensland from 1904-1906. After his death, a memorial fund was established in memory of Hutton and another Grand Master (1909-17), Adolph Hertzberg. This enabled the construction of the second building – the Hutton and Hertzberg Cottage – in 1932. The second cottage was free standing and situated a short distance behind Lewis Cottage. This building, also of brick construction, provided accommodation for four residents and a lounge.

The Hutton and Herzberg Cottage was designed by architect C.E. Plant and built at a cost of around ?1260. Plant was an English born engineer and architect who registered as an architect in Queensland in 1929. He later established a partnership with R.W. Voller.

In 1938, a new, larger block was constructed on the site containing seven bedrooms, a lounge and a dining room. This provided accommodation for 15 aged masons. It also provided improved staff quarters and kitchens. The new building created a long front elevation with deep verandahs and a formal entrance. It was skilfully joined to the 1925 section with matching brickwork. The new section was named the Robinson Block in memory of Thomas Robinson of the Morningside Lodge who bequeathed the residue of his estate to the Freemasons for the purpose of providing a home for aged masons. After his death in 1911, the sum of ?4610 was given towards this end.

The foundation stone for the Robinson Block was laid in 1937 by the Governor of Queensland, Sir Leslie Wilson, who returned to perform the official opening on 8 May 1938. At this time, Sir Leslie was also the Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of Queensland. At the opening, the contractor for the building, O. Brooks was presented with a Life Governor's jewel of the Aged Masons, Widows and Orphans' Institution.

After another hiatus in development caused by World War II, progress on the site continued with the 1948 construction of the A.E. Hall Extension. Comprised of eight bedrooms and a convalescent ward for four, the new section was officially opened by Grand Master E.A Jones on 30 October 1948. It adjoined the eastern side of the Robinson Block, creating a unified whole from the four stages of building work undertaken since 1925. The complex later served as the hospital until a new hospital and infirmary were built in 1977. It was then converted to thirteen self-contained flats for married couples.

The Masonic Home complex has continued to develop with substantial additions behind the earlier buildings over the succeeding decades. It now includes accommodation for 578 people, including a hospital, hostel, Nursing Home Flats and seventeen houses. The current heritage listing by the Brisbane City Council relates only to the sections built between 1925 and 1948 which face Ward Street.

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## Description

The brick and terracotta tile complex consists of four sections built between 1925 and 1948 with later additions at the rear. The main portion of the building, the Robinson Wing (1938) contains the entry porch. It is flanked by

Lewis Cottage (1925) on the western side and the AE Hall Extension (1948) on the east. The Hutton and Hertzberg Cottage (1932) is freestanding and situated behind Lewis Cottage.

Although the footprint of the complex is large, the roof form, chimneys and wide verandahs lend it a domestic air which softens its institutional presence. The three sections of the building which front Ward Street are unified by the continuous roof line and timber floored verandah with its solid brick balustrade. The dominant feature of the building is the striking entry which has Art Deco style painted render elements.

On the Ward Street frontage, the property is bounded by a low brick wall with solid brick piers capped with painted render and galvanised pipe and chainwire infill. A formal front entry to the property is provided by a wrought iron entranceway incorporating the words "Freemasons Homes". The elegant lettering is in keeping with the Interwar stylistic elements of the porch.

Additions to the rear of the building that were constructed after 1948 such as the beauty parlour, are not considered to be culturally significant.

The complex is set amongst generous grounds with established lawns and garden beds and some mature vegetation. This makes a substantial contribution to the aesthetics and amenity of the buildings and adds to the pleasant domestic ambience of this older section of the site. This garden context should be protected in any future development, particularly the tranquil area between the front wall and the main building.

### **Lewis Cottage (1925)**

Lewis Cottage is the smallest section of the complex. It is constructed from face brick with a well articulated pattern of darker glazed brick banding on the verandah columns, the sills and the pedestal base to the building. The roof is terracotta tiles with a brick chimney and a decorative timber gable. The cottage consists of a small central room with a verandah on three sides, and three smaller rooms at the rear. Two of the rear rooms have been used as a kitchen and bathroom and have later fitouts.

The flat is entered via a door from the verandah which features decorative brickwork above the doorway. Internally, the flat has fibro ceilings with timber battening and sash windows on the exterior walls. The central room contains a simple brick fireplace and an additional door onto the front verandah. A third door, also with decorative brickwork above the doorway, opens from the rear of the flat onto the side verandah.

One interior wall features vertical joint timber and a built in timber cupboard. The other walls are solid plastered masonry.

A small two-way cement ramp with a railing has been added to the entrance from the garden to the verandah.

### **Hutton and Hertzberg Cottage (1932)**

This building was not inspected internally. It is a freestanding structure situated a short distance behind Lewis Cottage. It has been constructed of similar materials to Lewis Cottage with simple finials on the tiled roof.

Like Lewis Cottage, the Hertzberg and Hutton Cottage is domestic in scale and design. The western elevation features a small projecting gable with timber battening infill typical of the Interwar period.

There are several sash windows of various sizes and a set of French doors on the eastern side. The windows have decorative brick lintels and window sills of darker glazed brick. The corners have well articulated decorative banding in a similar shade.

### **Robinson Block (1938)**

The third and largest stage of the home brought a major change to the complex – providing a formal entry and transforming the existing cottages into a grander institutional setting. Great care was taken to match the existing

brickwork and integrate the older sections into the new development, although the decorative banding pattern of darker bricks was not repeated. The chimney detail on Lewis Cottage was replicated in two new chimneys which stand sentinel on either side of the central portion.

The central entrance feature consists of a projecting brick porch and parapet framed by a larger broken hipped roof form. The brickwork is thrown into relief by white painted render around the arch and on the projecting vertical fins which give the design an Art Deco motif. The entry porch is framed by a broken hipped roof form which equally projects beyond the main verandah line.

The entrance door is framed by leadlight side and fan window panels. The door would have once opened into a large foyer with a fireplace at either end. This room has been divided by walls which form a passageway and the remaining side sections have been incorporated into the adjacent flats.

The Robinson Block contains five self-contained flats as well as a library which opens off the central corridor and an additional bathroom. Most of the library is similar to the rest of the building in style, for example the decorative plaster ceiling cornices.

Only Flats 9 and 10 were inspected for privacy reasons.

### **Flat 9**

This self contained flat consists of some of the original entry room, including a brick fireplace with a timber mantel in what is now a sitting room. This room has decorative plaster cornices featuring a flower motif. A timber veneer dado covers the lower sections of one of the walls. There is some water damage on the front wall of the sitting room.

Behind this room is a passageway leading to three other rooms – a bathroom (not original), kitchen and bedroom. The windows are, once again, sash windows.

### **Flat 10**

Flat 10 is similar in design and condition to Flat 9 although it has no fireplace and the cornices are of a different pattern. It consists of four rooms including a bathroom and kitchen which have both had later fitouts. The bathroom has had a later partition added, creating a small enclosed space. One of the external windows in the bathroom has opaque glass which is possibly original.

The flat has sash windows throughout and French doors opening on the verandah.

### **AE Hall Extension (1948)**

This was the final stage in what would become later become the Hospital Section. Originally consisting of eight bedrooms and a small convalescent ward, the AE Hall Extension now houses four self contained flats. This section was not inspected internally for privacy reasons.

The AE Hall Extension, like the other sections of the complex, incorporates the front verandah into the living spaces of its accommodation. There is also an area outside the rear of the section which was once the external wall but now provides additional verandah type space for the residents. French doors open on to this area.

The brickwork on the external walls and verandah is slightly lighter than the earlier sections. The eastern side of the extension has been enclosed underneath where the ground level drops away. There are additional steps from Flat 4 at the eastern end of the building out into the front garden.

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## **Statement of significance**

## Relevant assessment criteria

This is a place of local heritage significance and meets one or more of the local heritage criteria under the Heritage planning scheme policy of the *Brisbane City Plan 2014*. It is significant because:

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### Representative

#### CRITERION D

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or classes of cultural places

as an excellent example of a purpose-built charitable institution constructed during the interwar period.

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### Aesthetic

#### CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

As a building which balances the solidity of its prominent roof and masonry walls with fenestrated verandah brickwork and a striking entrance with Art Deco elements.

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### Historical association

#### CRITERION H

The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organization of importance in the city's or local area's history

as a site which has been developed by the charitable arm of the Freemasonry movement in Queensland and which has provided care for the community for more than 80 years.

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## References

1. Brisbane City Council Archives. New Building Register Jan 1930-32
2. Brisbane City Council Water Supply and Sewerage Detail Plans
3. Brisbane City Council (BCC) aerial photographs.
4. Board of Benevolence and of Aged Masons, Widows and Ophans Fund. *Golden Jubilee Year of the Aged Masons, Widows and Orphans' Fund 1946-1995*. 1995
5. *Courier Mail*, 9 May 1938
6. Department of Natural Resources and Mining, Land titles information

7. United Grand Lodge of Queensland website. 2005. Viewed 21 August 2008, <<http://www.uglq.org.au/history.cfm>>
  8. Sandgate & District Historical Society and Museum Inc. *A Walk Around Sandgate: Shorncliffe – Sandgate Tour Vol I*. Strathpine: S&DHS, 1991
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**Note:** This citation has been prepared on the basis of evidence available at the time including an external examination of the building. The statement of significance is a summary of the most culturally important aspects of the property based on the available evidence, and may be re-assessed if further information becomes available. The purpose of this citation is to provide an informed evaluation for heritage registration and information. This does not negate the necessity for a thorough conservation study by a qualified practitioner, before any action is taken which may affect its heritage significance.

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